

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6944

S E C R E T KUWAIT 2152

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DEPT PASS ACTION SECDEF, CNO INFO USCINCEUR

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS KU

SUBJ: MILITARY SALES TO KUWAIT - F-8 AIRCRAFT

1. DURING MY MEETING WITH MINDEF SHAIKH SAAD JUNE 18 HE ASKED WHETHER SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN PRICE WOULD BE POSSIBLE IF GOK DECIDED RENT RPT RENT F-8 AIRCRAFT. HE NOTED GOK HAD NOT YET MADE UP ITS MIND WHETHER TO RENT OR BUY AIRCRAFT. I REPLIED I THOUGHT IT WOULD NOT PAY GOK TO RENT F-8 S IF IT INTENDED KEEP THEM THREE YEARS OR MORE. (WE NOTE ONLY F-8/ K RENTAL PRICES QUOTED.)

2. SAAD SAID HE HOPED HAVE ARMS TALKS COMPLETED BY END OF MONTH.

3. WE ASSUME THIS REQUEST STEMS FROM STRONG KUWAITI PREFERENCE FOR NEW EQUIPMENT FOR THE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM VS REBUILT EQUIPMENT. APPARENTLY MINDEF IS TAKING THIS POSITION TO AVOID NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CRITICISM IN EVENT FAILURE OF EQUIPMENT. A FAILURE OF RENTED F-8 EQUIPMENT APPARENTLY IN KUWAITI EYES WOULD NOT HAVE THE STING OF A DIRECT PURCHASE SINCE IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED ONLY A GAP- FILLER ANYWAY.

4. IN AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION BETWEEN HOENIG AND CSAF AJEEL AND ASST CH STAFF LOGISTICS AL SAYEGH IT WAS STATED THAT QUESTION OF F-8 BUY OR RENT, OR EVEN REVERT TO THE NEW F-5 E AIRCRAFT IS UNDER INTENSIVE STUDY AND SHOULD BE CONCLUDED IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. WE BELIEVE TECHNICAL STAFF OF KAF CONVINCED OF MERITS OF
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REBUILT F-8 BUT THE NEW VS USED SYNDROME MAY BE AN OVERRIDING FACTOR.

5. INCIDENTALLY, HOENIG WAS ASSURED THAT THE GOK DEFENSE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH US EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING AIRCRAFT, WHEREVER POSSIBLE. DECISIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE ON THE TECHNICAL LEVEL TO PROCEED WITH THE JOC (\$11.3 MILLION), RADAR (\$9.0 MILLION), ADVANCED PILOT TRAINING (\$1.0 MILLION) AND NEW WHEELED VEHICLES (\$15 - 20 MILLION). L/ O SHOULD BE SIGNED SHORTLY.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: A. I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW URGENTLY LOWEST POSSIBLE RENTAL CHARGE ON F-8 H TO KUWAITI CONFIGURATION. FOR EXAMPLE, COULD BASE PRICE BE CALCULATED BY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ALREADY AMORTIZED PORTION OF AIRCRAFT. B. F-8 AIRCRAFT ARE NOT, NOR EVER WERE, MORE THAN STOP- GAP MEASURE IN MINDS KUWAITIS. WE NEED US DECISION ON FOLLOW- ON AIRCRAFT IMMEDIATELY. (SEE KUWAIT 2053).
STOLTZFUS

NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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